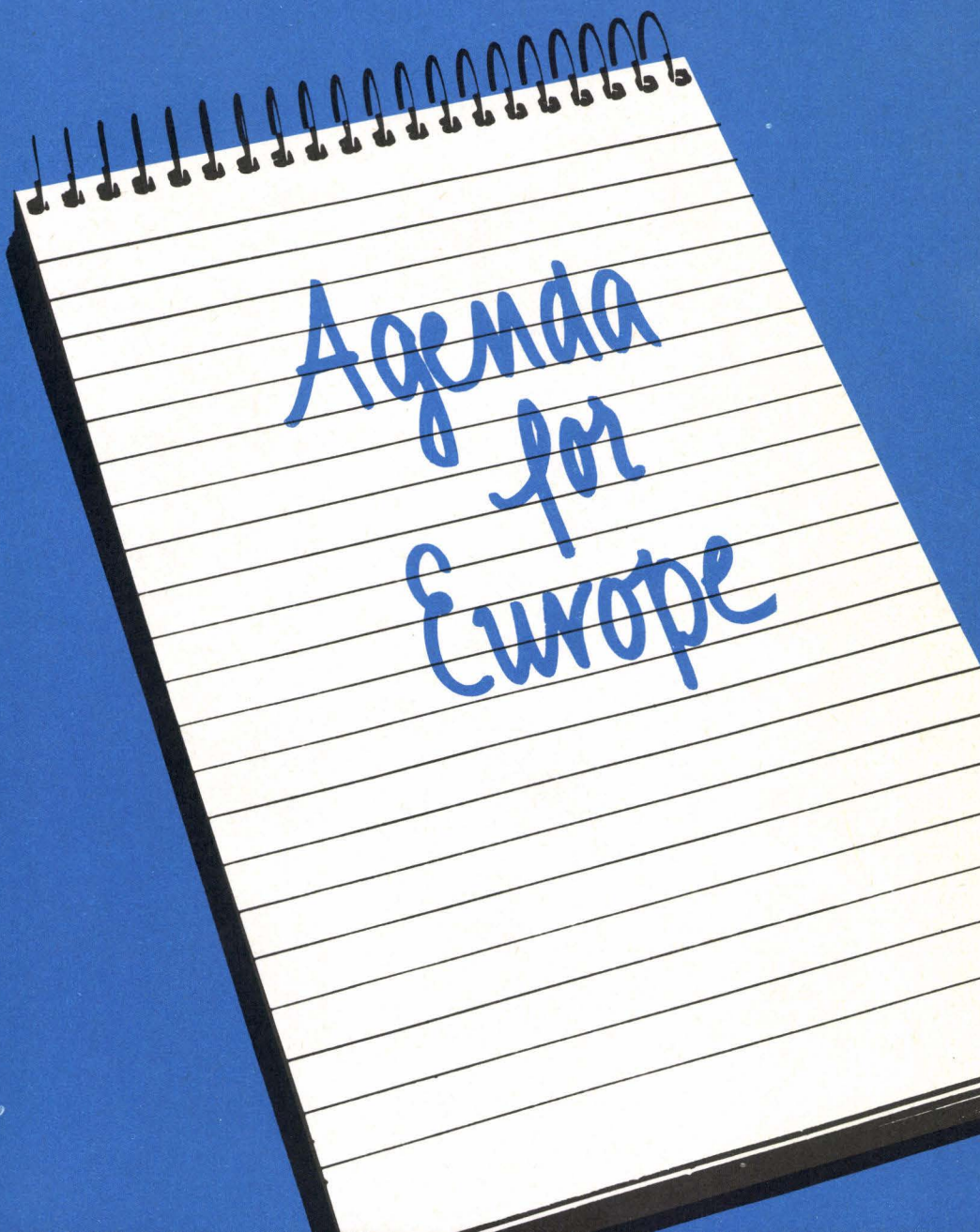


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# European Community

No.2

February/March 1977



Agenda  
for  
Europe

# European Community Contents



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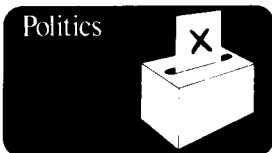
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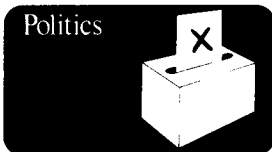
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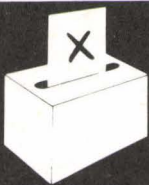
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# Agenda for Europe

## The Commission states its priorities

*A review of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP); an attack on economic divergence in the Community; a rejection of pointless 'harmonisation'; a wide-ranging debate on energy policy; preparation for European Elections; a strengthening of the Commission; and solution of the problems of further enlargement – these were the main internal priorities stated by President Roy Jenkins in his 'programme speech' to the European Parliament on February 8.*

*Here are some key extracts from the speech, and from an accompanying policy memorandum.*

### **The CAP**

Consumers rightly insist that our policies for agriculture must be consistent with our other economic objectives, and particularly with the overriding need to combat inflation. Our proposals for this year's farm prices will be framed in this context. I have no doubt that the prudent course will be one of price moderation. As well as submitting price proposals we must look more clearly at the underlying problems in the agricultural sector. The fundamental questions are clear. How can we assure stable markets and fair incomes for producers, and at the same time guarantee supplies at reasonable prices to consumers? Should we plan, in the different and more difficult employment circumstances of today, for a continued movement of labour from the land,

or should we for social and environmental reasons seek to encourage and sustain farming activity, if necessary on a part-time basis? How do we resolve the regional differences, structural difficulties and disparities of income? These questions cannot be answered merely by managing the existing mechanisms of the common agricultural policy. We need to look closely at its long-term objectives. This will provide one of our most important priorities in the year ahead. Our review must serve, not merely to keep the common agricultural policy afloat, but to chart its course right.

### **Economic integration**

We face three formidable, and interlocking, obstacles to advance. The first is the stubborn persistence of high unemployment. Second are the high, though varying, rates of inflation throughout the Community. The third is the widening gap between the economic performances and real standards of living of our member States. These three obstacles reinforce each other. If we are to move forward, we must move to overcome all three obstacles together. That will provide the central, theme of our economic policies.

Further initiatives are therefore needed as well. In the first place, the Commission undertakes to devise a general policy to concentrate its present and future financial resources on the central problem of economic

divergence. We must devise a more diversified and flexible means of responding to the urgent needs of various parts of the Community economy – a means which takes account of the fact that the underlying causes of cyclical problems are often structural. We shall work out our ideas and consult member States about how best to act.

This will be made easier by the action to be taken to co-ordinate the Community's financial instruments – Regional Fund, Social Fund, EAGGF guidance section, ECSC credit and investment and EIB loans – all under the responsibility of one and the same member of the Commission. The budget will provide a further means of ensuring the implementation of priorities following the introduction of stricter control.

## **Industry, energy, jobs**

We must pursue the practical work of removing barriers to trade through harmonising company law, competition law, and taxes. We should not indulge in a bureaucratic game of harmonisation for harmonisation's sake.

The short-term economic case for a big immediate investment in nuclear power stations must be weighed against the possible environmental dangers. If the debate is to produce satisfactory results it should be conducted on a Community as well as a national level.

Full employment cannot be achieved simply by stimulating demand. Here we shall try to provide co-ordinated labour market policies throughout the Community.

## **Elections and enlargement**

In the period immediately before us, leading up to direct elections, it is clear that as the Community develops and the Community budget

increases in size, the need for direct democratic accountability becomes steadily more pressing.

I have already promised that this Commission intends to treat the present parliament as it will treat the directly elected one, and that, in particular, we shall send no proposal to the Council without seriously and systematically considering whether it is likely to receive a majority here.

As well as strengthening the Commission's relationship with the parliament, we must take action to strengthen the Commission itself and to make it more effective.

The Commission will be sympathetic to enlargement but it will insist that the problems be faced and not glossed over. That unity must also be sustained outside Europe in handling our external relations. The Community must endeavour to speak with one voice to the world. If we are determined, inside the Community, to make clear our concern for our own weaker regions, to deal so far as we can with poverty and unemployment, we cannot divide that internal concern from the world outside.

## **Keeping promises**

We must not promise what we cannot achieve, for if we do so we will merely add to that cynical disillusionment with political persons and institutions which is today one of the greatest menaces to democracy. But at the same time we must not limit our real possibilities of achievement by a deadening caution or an inability to lift our sights. We want our deeds to be a little better than our words. Let us always do more than we promise to do. In this way the great institutions we represent will be in a real and practical sense the means by which we go forward: the very engine of Europe.





# The month in Europe

## More cash for Britain

The benefits of a uniting Europe are not to be measured in cash terms alone; but in hard times, money helps. Recent weeks have seen further Community loans and grants to Britain, including:

□ £18.5 million loaned to the Post Office by the European Investment Bank (EIB), for ten years at  $8\frac{7}{8}$  per cent, to help expand telecommunications in Northern Ireland;

□ £17 million loaned by the EIB, on the same terms, to the British Steel Corporation (BSC), for projects in Scotland and North-east England;

□ \$US30 million loaned by the EIB for seven years at  $8\frac{3}{8}$  per cent to Santa Fe Minerals (UK) Inc., for developing the Thistle oilfield;

□ \$US51 million loaned by the EIB for eight years at  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent to British Petroleum for an ectic acid plant at Hull and for a pipeline between the Ninian oilfield and Sullom Voe in the Shetlands;

□ £10 million loaned by the EIB for twelve years at  $8\frac{3}{8}$  per cent to the National Water Council for projects in north-east and south-west England;

□ £111,000 granted by the EC Commission to BSC to help alleviate redundancies at Swindon and Scunthorpe;

□ Nearly £10 million loaned by the Community to BSC for projects in

Sheffield-Aldwarke, Stocksbridge, Tinsley Park, and Teesside;

□ A further series of grants from the Regional Development Fund.

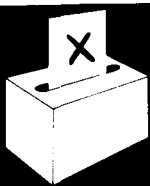
## Butter ban

Following reports of the sale of Community-subsidized butter to the USSR, the Commission reacted swiftly, first by suspending butter export subsidies for three days, then by changing the system for fixing them, to give it time to monitor sales and destinations. In particular, it will now no longer fix subsidies in advance for sales such as those made to the USSR. The real culprit, of course, is the 'butter mountain' produced by the high prices that poorer dairy farmers need, but which encourage large-scale producers to create surpluses.

## Quote of the Month

'I believe that our duty is not to invoke history, but to start once again to make it: not to praise famous men by sitting idly on the scaffolding of the half-finished building and drinking toasts to those who laid the foundations so well. The best tribute we can pay to them is not to praise them but to emulate them, to get on with our job and add at least another storey to the building.'

*President Roy Jenkins, speaking to the European Parliament on January 11, 1977.*



# Public backs Euro-elections

## UK still says yes

The latest public opinion poll carried out by the Commission indicates a generally more favourable attitude towards the European Community, and particularly strong support for direct elections to the European Parliament in all countries, including the United Kingdom and Denmark. The average figure across the Community is 60% in favour.

Nearly half the people questioned (48%) said that the elections would be an event of great consequence. Only 28% thought them of little significance and 24% did not reply.

Leaders of opinion in Italy and Germany believe that parties of the same colour should unite to fight their campaigns together. The British, Irish and Danish opinion leaders believe, on the contrary, that each national party should campaign under its own banner.

After a drop in public support for the Community last May, there has been a slight recovery. The latest poll was carried out among 9,000 people over 15 years of age in November, soon after the Nine agreed on direct elections.

In November, 55 per cent of those questioned thought the Community was a good thing, against 53 per cent in May. Only in Denmark is there an adverse opinion. On average, 13 per cent of the total questioned thought the Community a bad

thing, while 32 per cent held no strong opinion or failed to respond.

Leaders of opinion among the Nine countries came out by two-thirds to a half positively in favour of the Community.

Although a majority in the United Kingdom (39 to 34 per cent) think the Community a good thing rather than a bad thing, more British people believe things would get better if Britain did not take part in the Community (48 to 32 per cent).

But if there were a referendum for or against participation, an average of two-thirds of those asked would vote 'yes' and only the Danes 'No', by 52 to 33 per cent. The UK figures are 45 per cent for, 44 per cent against no reply 11 per cent.

This new public opinion inquiry shows that in spite of the crisis and difficulties of all sorts which have beset the Member States, the public, and notably leaders of opinion, remain favourable to the European Community and to the Common Market. This attachment is based on the conviction that, ultimately, the Common Market has had a beneficial effect on the general economy of all the members and that, if the Community did not exist, things would probably be worse.

The complete report will be available later, first in French, then in the other Community languages.



# More Social Fund grants

## £29 million for UK

The Commission has approved the financing of the third series of applications from the European Social Fund for vocational training activities in the member States.

The Social Fund's assistance in the form of non-repayable grants for this third series of applications amounts to approximately £121.3m.

The expenditure approved in this third series is allocated over a three-year period covering 1976/77/78. The commitments to aid retraining schemes during 1976 amount to £60m; in 1977 to £43.4m, and in 1978 to £17.4m.

However, some of these figures may have to be adjusted because of 'accounting shifts' and consequently the final figures for total applications 1976 will not be available until a later date. The total *budget* for 1976 is £183.3m.

In this third series the United Kingdom receives a total of around £29.4m bringing the aggregate total during 1976 to £36.2m.

In accordance with the rules of the reform of the Social Fund the Commission can reimburse 50 per cent of the cost of retraining schemes financed by a public authority. In the case of schemes carried out by private bodies, the Commission grant will equal that made by the public authorities.

### Young people

The Social Fund has agreed a contribution of £4,289,308 (10.3 mua) towards the 1976 programme of special measures organised by the Training Services Agency and designed to make an additional 10,000 apprenticeships available to young unemployed people in assisted areas.

### Migrants

About £36,000 has been granted by the Social Fund to the National Centre of Industrial Language Training to help finance training for 200 teachers responsible for language courses for migrant workers within firms to facilitate integration into the working environment.

### Technical progress

The creation of the Joint Standing Committee for the major national newspapers (a body comprising both sides of industry) to implement a far-reaching plan for re-organisation, has led to a significant re-training plan to face up to the challenge and promise of technological advance of new equipment. The Social Fund will contribute approximately 7.2 mua (£3m) over the next three years towards the cost of re-training approximately 12,000 workers affected by technical progress. (*Figures in £ are approximate conversions from units of account.*)



# Energy — new moves

## Conservation needed but nuclear power too

During the 1990's the world supply of oil will peak and thereafter gradually diminish; the position regarding world supplies of gas is not much better. At present these two sources supply between 60 to 70 per cent of the world's energy so that, unless estimates are wildly wrong, two-thirds of the world's energy supply will be diminishing before the end of the century.

That energy gap can only be alleviated by drastic conservation of fuel and by the vigorous development of new sources of supply, of which nuclear power is the most important. Within our time scale nuclear power depends on uranium.

### Symposium

This was the gist of the introductory speech made by Lord Hinton of Bankside to the International Symposium on Geology, Mining, and Extractive Processing of Uranium, held in London last month. Co-sponsored by the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy and the European Commission, the Symposium was particularly concerned, within the global context, with European needs for uranium in relation to world supply and demand, and the technical papers explored various aspects of this theme.

In a welcoming message, HRH

Prince Philip pointed out that professional engineers are just as concerned about the quality of life of future generations on this planet as are those laymen who fear the environmental consequences of expansion of nuclear energy. He hoped, therefore, that all those attending the symposium, would be sympathetic to naturally anxious lay colleagues.

Lord Hinton's theme on the diminishing supplies of current sources of energy was taken up by Michael Davis, Director of Nuclear Energy Policy in the Commission. He pointed out that 'The New Energy Strategy', adopted by the Council of Ministers in early 1975, sought to reduce Community reliance on imported oil from over 60 per cent to at least 50 per cent by 1985. To compensate there would be a massive programme of nuclear-generated electricity. (Though this had fallen behind schedule, nuclear energy was expected to contribute about 12 per cent of Community energy needs by 1985.)

### Uranium

Such a programme required a reliable supply of uranium, available so far in only very limited quantities in Western Europe. Thus, according to Mr Davis, as the Community



nuclear programme is some 75 per cent of all that of Western Europe, it will be the largest single purchaser on the world market. The presently known world reserves of uranium are technically sufficient to support forecast needs until the mid-1980's but, he suggested, massive exploration efforts must be undertaken to increase the reserve base from thereon. Hence, the Commission's great interest in the symposium.

Meeting environmental criticisms of a massive nuclear programme head on, Lord Hinton insisted that it was an illusion to believe that other forms of energy (e.g. solar or wave-power) could be developed to meet the forthcoming energy gap. Further, one should think not only of European and North American resources and demands, but also those of the Third World. Africa, for instance, (outside South Africa) consumes only about one-tenth of the energy consumed by the industrialised nations. To hinder the development of nuclear energy would consign the developing countries to further generations of poverty because the energy gap would not be bridged in time.

## **Dr Brunner**

Speaking at a press conference in Brussels a few days later, on February 3, Dr Guido Brunner, the Commissioner responsible for energy and research, confirmed that in 1985, according to a present forecast, the Community will still have to look outside for 55 per cent of its continuously growing energy needs.

The development of its own resources remains the best hope for the Community. Neither coal nor gas can fill the energy gap. Other possible sources such as water, geothermal,

solar, wind, wave, tidal, can only make a modest contribution. Thus, a substantial nuclear power programme appears to be necessary.

However, increasing public concern over such matters as safety, security, and disposal of nuclear waste cannot be ignored. But the price of delay is clear: more dependence on Third Country suppliers, extra balance-of-payments, burdens, low growth.

Dr Brunner intends to prepare open hearings of recognised experts on atomic problems in order to involve public opinion in the nuclear debate.

In the meantime the Commission will intensify Community research on nuclear safety and waste disposal.

The Community is dependent on the United States and Canada for much of its nuclear fuel. Dr. Brunner has appealed to the United States and Canada to maintain supplies and fulfil contracts. The Commission shares the Americans' concern at the dangers of proliferation and misuse. Since 1953, the Community has enforced its own system of controls, which up to now have proved efficient. However, the Community will now be sending a mission of Community experts to America for discussions as soon as convenient to the American authorities, with a follow-up meeting between Dr Brunner and the U.S. Energy Secretary, Mr Schlesinger later.

## **Euratom loans**

The Commission's plan is to make a sum of 300 million u.a. available to finance nuclear power stations. The money would be raised on the capital market. Requests for these loans have already been received

from Italy, France, The Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom. The plan received support from the economic and social committee (24/4/75) and the Parliament (00/0/75). The Commissioner hopes the Council of Ministers will take a positive decision on these loans soon.

## Jet lag

Earlier, Dr Brunner had visited London to meet Mr Gerald Kaufman, Minister of State at the Department for Industry, to discuss the Joint European Taurus (JET) on which disagreement remains in the Council over the choice of site. Dr Brunner later warned of the dangers of delaying a decision any longer and expressed pleasure that Mr Kaufman, in his role in the Presidency of the Research Council, would visit the Nine capitals and meet European Parliamentarians on the subject.

The Chairman of the Economic and Social Committee, Mr Basil de Ferranti, sent a message to the President of the Council, Mr Crosland, insisting on the immediate need for a decision on the siting of JET.

Dr Brunner also met Mr Tony Benn, Secretary of State for Energy. They agreed to aim at two Council

meetings on energy during the British Presidency. They also agreed on the need to seek parallel national policies in order to reach a common energy strategy for the Community.

## Joint action

Although the Community's common energy policy thus remains an aspiration as much as an achievement, the Nine have at least agreed on mutual aid in the event of another sudden oil crisis. In December, the Council agreed on the substance of the Decision on the exporting of crude oil and petroleum products from one Member State to another in the event of supply difficulties.

This decision, based on the desire to affect intra-Community trade as little as possible, involves the introduction – when supply difficulties arise – of a system of automatic authorizations to be granted by the exporting member State.

The Decision also lays down the procedure for repealing any crisis measures when the situation no longer justifies their continued application.

Lastly, it provides that the Council may, on a proposal from the Commission, unanimously decide on any other measure to ensure optimum supplies of crude oil and petroleum products for the entire Community.

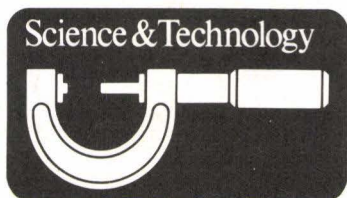
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## Statistic of the Month

The share of total general government expenditure has increased sharply in all member States, from about 25 per cent to 36 per cent of GDP in 1959 to about 40 per cent to 55 per cent in 1975.

The Community budget's share of Community GDP increased from almost nil in 1959 to about 0.4 per cent in 1968 and 0.6 per cent in 1973. Since then, there has been a further slight increase.

*Source:* Commission reply to European Parliamentary Question by M. Pierre-Bernard Cousté.



# Order out of babel

## Translation by Computer

Translation is a key instrument of understanding in the Community. Without it, in such a multilingual setting, there could be little progress towards integration nor the smooth operation of the Community institutions.

Even so, it requires immense cost and effort to enable representatives of the Nine countries to understand each other; the situation could be more difficult when the Community further enlarges with, for a start, the admission of Greece.

To cope with the problem the Commission has sent a Communication to the Council suggesting greater use of computers for basic translation purposes. Modern data systems today can replace much repetitive work in translating, such as consultation with reference books or sorting through index cards. The Community translation service has already begun to build up a terminology bank and experiment with a multilingual retrieval system for metallurgy. Studies are also in hand on methods of transfer of scientific and technical information from one language to another.

The new plan involves action on several fronts:

☐ *Automatic pre-translation of unprocessed texts drafted in natural language:* The Commission intends

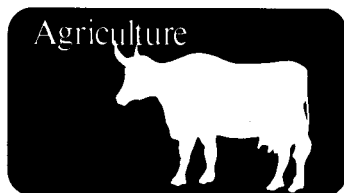
to experiment with one pair of Community languages and one specialised field, e.g. rapid draft translations that will, for instance, enable an engineer to grasp the substance of a document without necessarily understanding all the nuances; or translations of sufficient quality to pass directly to checking and revision.

☐ *Automatic translation of texts drafted in limited syntax:* Initially this will be applied to scientific and para-scientific texts.

☐ *Terminology banks:* The Commission is already trying to establish a terminology bank for translators and this will be extended through the computer.

☐ *Multi-lingual thesauri:* Work already started in this field will be expanded.

☐ *Improvement of techniques, assessment and research, and promotion:* The plan involves continual efforts to refine techniques, the review and revision of experiments, and an effort to interest all those concerned with efficient multi-lingual translation (e.g. publishers, teachers, scientists, interpreters, etc) in what the Community is doing. The Third European Congress on information systems and networks, to be held in May 1977 and devoted entirely to multi-lingual problems, could be a starting point.



# Wild birds

## Europe to the rescue

At least 60 species of wild bird will become extinct, and many others decline in population, unless protective measures are introduced soon. The Commission's recent proposals, drawn up in consultation with ornithologists and organisations concerned with the protection of wild-life, seek to introduce common conservation measures throughout the Community while, at the same time, allowing for legitimate sport.

### The purpose

The proposed measures aim:

- ☐ to introduce a conservation policy for wild birds regularly observed in the member States;
- ☐ to maintain the numbers of the various species at a level compatible with ecological, economic, recreational and scientific requirements;
- ☐ to introduce a system of protection applicable to all species of wild bird, except for those expressly named, such as game birds, which are often already covered by law.

### Background

A glance at the facts shows that such a policy is sorely needed.

- ☐ each year an estimated 170 million wild animals, including millions of birds, such as finches, buntings, larks, warblers, swallows and other migratory birds are shot down, trapped or netted. In Italy alone a total of £70m is spent each year on 1,200,000,000 cartridges, and shoot-

ing goes on from August to March.

- ☐ some 400 species of birds observed regularly within Community territory are threatened. About 60 species could soon be extinct, while in most others ornithologists have found evidence of population decline.

☐ while hunting and netting are the main killers, natural habitats for birds are increasingly threatened by urbanization and the use of pesticides.

- ☐ weakening of the biological chain has already meant an increase in pests and insects; farmers use chemicals to destroy them and the vicious circle starts again.

### The proposals

While it is true that seven of the Community countries already have laws protecting birds, and France and Italy are in the process of drawing up legislation, hitherto there has been no agreement on which birds should be protected – an important matter because of many birds' migratory habits. A species protected in one country may be regarded as fair game in another. Thus the proposals include Annexes listing the different species to which the directive, if adopted, would apply, including not only the birds, but their young, eggs, nests and habitats. The measures seek to restrict not only wanton slaughter, but trading in wild birds as well.

All Governments would be expected to introduce measures to maintain the population of the



listed species (see Box) at reasonable ecological levels; to maintain or restore sufficient diversity in habitat for the birds to survive (including protection from pollution) and to establish a general system of legal protection for all species of wild birds, prohibiting in particular:

- (a) deliberate killing or capture;
- (b) egg collecting;
- (c) the deliberate destruction of nests and eggs.

The only exemptions to this general rule would be species of game birds, such as goose, duck, partridge, grouse, wood-pigeon and pheasant, which are regarded as game throughout the Community or in certain countries. While these may be killed or captured, collection of their eggs would be prohibited, and large scale or non-selective capturing or killing (snare, traps, poison bait, glue, automatic weapons, aircraft,

etc.) would be prohibited.

Some birds which may be pests, such as magpies, rooks, starlings and sparrows, may be excluded from some provisions of the Directive as long as the general requirements to maintain an adequate population is respected in national law.

Apart from dead game, the keeping or offering for sale of live or dead birds would be banned. The only derogation from the Directive allowed – and then subject to scrutiny by the Commission – would be to prevent damage to crops, indigenous flora and fauna, and for reasons of scientific research and rearing.

A whole way of life and traditional eating habits in some countries – notably Italy and southern France – could be affected by the adoption of these proposals. If the wild birds are to be saved from decimation or extinction, however, something must be done soon.

## Species at risk

Whooper Swan	Stone Curlew	Black Vulture
Berwick's Swan	Great Northern Diver	Griffon Vulture
Barnacle Goose	Night Heron	Honey Buzzard
Brent Goose	Little Egret	Black Kite
Red-crested Pochard	Great White Heron	Montagu's Harrier
White-headed Duck	Squacco Heron	Hen Harrier
Pin-tailed Sandgrouse	Purple Heron	Marsh Harrier
Slender-billed Gull	White Stork	Golden Eagle
Audouin's Gull	Spoonbill	Osprey
Gull-billed Tern	Glossy Ibis	Short-toed Eagle
Roseate Tern	Greater Flamingo	Lanner Falcon
Sandwich Tern	Cormorant	Peregrine
Common Tern	Purple Gallinule	Eleonora's Falcon
Arctic Tern	Great Bustard	White-backed
Little Tern	Little Bustard	Woodpecker
Great Snipe	Crane	Snowy Owl
Ruff	Bonelli's Eagle	Eagle Owl
Dotterel guignard	Booted Eagle	Leach's Petrel
Avocet	White-tailed Eagle	Storm Petrel
Black-winged Stilt	Egyptian Vulture	Cory's Shearwater
Red-necked Phalarope	Bearded Vulture	Corsican Nuthatch



# The Community in the world

## Egypt, Jordan and Syria

On January 18, the European Community signed cooperation agreements with Egypt, Jordan and Syria, following the completion of negotiations with these countries in October 1976. These agreements are part of the Community's Mediterranean policy. At the Paris Summit of October, 1972, the heads of state and government declared that the European Community "attached essential importance . . . to the fulfilment of its commitments to the countries of the Mediterranean basin with which agreements have been or will be concluded, agreements which should be the subject of an overall and balanced approach".

To achieve this aim agreements were signed with the Maghreb states (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) in April 1976. Negotiations with the Mashreq countries (Egypt, Jordan and Syria) began in early 1976. The only country with which agreement has not now been concluded is Lebanon. M. Claude Cheysson, Commissioner in charge of relations with developing countries, has announced that negotiations with Lebanon have now begun. All these countries had earlier had trade agreements with the Community.

The new arrangements, however, are more extensive.

## Generalised preferences

At the end of 1976, the Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities the Regulations and Decisions on the application of generalized preferences to developing countries in 1977. This decision was taken after consulting the Associated States concerned and the ACP States.

The amount of possible preferential imports in 1977 will increase from 4.6 to 6.5 thousand million u.a., a rise of more than 40 per cent in value.

## New Lomé countries

On January 18, 1977 the Council settled the last remaining problems concerning application of the Lomé Convention to the three former overseas countries and territories – Surinam, Seychelles and the Comoro State.

The Council also reached agreement on all the terms for the accession of three further States to the Lomé Convention – Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Cape Verde and Papua New Guinea.



## Prize for Monnet

Jean Monnet, originator of the European Communities, has been awarded the Adolphe Bentinck Prize for 1976. He has donated the prize money – 15,000 French francs – to the Paul Finet Foundation for the assistance of miners' and steel-workers' families.

## Pork problem

On January 25, the Commission told the UK Government that, in its view, the proposed British subsidy of 5½ pence per kilo for home-produced pigmeat was against Community rules. The Government argues that the subsidy is needed to protect home producers.

## Mergers approved

The Commission recently approved the acquisition by Johnson & Firth Brown of a controlling shareholding in Dunford & Elliott; shortly afterwards, it granted a conditional waiver to Associated Electrical Industries and Reyrolle Parsons, which had jointly established a company called Vacuum Interrupters Ltd., to develop, design, manufacture, and sell this type of circuit breaker, used in switchgear apparatus.

## To have and have not

The works of Ernest Hemingway are a moveable feast, according to the EC Commission. Hearing that the paperback edition of *The Old Man and the Sea* was not then available in Ireland and the UK, although on sale in other Community countries, it ruled in January that copyright agreements should not thus divide the common market. Since then, the book has come across the Channel and into the shops. A farewell to frontiers, or for whom the Treaty tolls?

## New publication

The publications office of the European Communities has just published for the second time the annual report on the state of agriculture in the Nine.

An original publication, the report contains information that is not available from any other sources. It gives a complete view of the evolution of agriculture and agricultural markets in 1976.

Its 400 pages contain a written commentary as well as more than 250 pages of tables. Its size – only a little larger than a pocket book – makes it especially handy.

The report is published in the six official languages of the Community. It can be obtained from H.M.S.O.



# A foot in the door

## Help for housewives

The Commission recently submitted a proposal for a Directive to provide consumers with greater protection in trading practices away from business premises (doorstep selling). The Commission has tried to ensure that the element of surprise inherent in this type of sale is not harmful to the consumer by giving him the right to reconsider the obligations arising from the sale.

### Why?

As distinct from contracts concluded on the trader's premises, the consumer usually has neither the time nor the opportunity to check beforehand the properties, quality or price of the goods offered or the other conditions of the offer or to compare the offer with other offers.

Thus the element of surprise, combined with the trader's greater negotiating skills, often results in the consumer making hasty bargains or assuming obligations which he may later regret.

The estimated turnover in direct sales and sales by representatives in the Community is between 1000 and 2000 million units of account.

The main branches concerned are the following:

- ☐ household appliances;
- ☐ cars;
- ☐ cosmetics;

- ☐ household products;
- ☐ furniture;
- ☐ books and records.

### The mechanism proposed

The proposed Directive provides that contracts negotiated away from business premises must be in writing.

The written contract must contain certain items of information which are particularly important from the after-sales viewpoint (complaints, etc.). The consumer also has the right to revoke the contract within a period of at least seven days after signing it. Since the Directive is intended to provide a minimum degree of protection for consumers, certain articles enable the Member States to adopt additional provisions if they wish to provide greater protection for consumers, e.g. with regard to the length of the 'cooling-off' period, outright prohibition of the sales of certain goods or services away from business premises, a system of prior authorization and measures to prevent the false dating of contracts.

The Directive does not prevent the Community from adopting special provisions for particular types of contracts, in such fields as consumer credit, home study courses, securities and insurance.